Public Education-Jennifer Martinez Molina

Alexandra: [00:00:01] Hi Jennifer. My name is Alexandra Connelly, here behind the camera.

Jenniffer: [00:00:05] My name is Jennifer Martinez Molina. I am a Social Studies and History teacher at the September 20, 1988 Middle School and this is my 7th year. I work Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 2:30 pm. Here, at least now, we are in 7th grade with the geography of Puerto Rico; in 6th we talk about Social Sciences. We try to add topics that make the class a little more interesting for the students, topics that they know how to develop. We help the students; this year we also have students with some needs. We make the necessary accommodations and we are always here for the student at school 24/7.

Alexandra: [00:00:53] How do the multiple crises in Puerto Rico impact your profession as a teacher in Vieques?

Jenniffer: [00:00:58] Actually, we have been affected by these crises first by the heat, which is unbearable. We have to find fans out of our own pockets. In this school, we can't put air conditioning on, there is something wrong there that makes it impossible. So, in that sense, we are being affected by the heat, which is very intense, as well as our clothing, but we are not in tune with the weather outside.

Jenniffer: [00:01:34] I also have a history club called Club Boriquén, where we need buses that the municipality provides us to go on excursions and many times we have been denied. We already received a letter from the last excursion saying that they could not take us anywhere else. That is affecting us, because we want to take the students to see their island and it is a bit impossible for us, but thank God we always have people who have their private taxis that take us. [Another factor that affects her profession as a teacher]. The Social Studies curriculum does not allow us to teach what the history of Vieques is and the students always ask us many things about Vieques because they are interested in knowing. So, we have created this club to add the history of their island. We take them to the Fortín so that they [the students] learn and give them more information about their history, because it is a place of struggle and they must know.

Alexandra: [00:02:49] Do you know if there are classes on the history of Vieques in any school in Vieques?

Jennifer: [00:02:55] Not that I know of.

Alexandra: [00:02:58] Jennifer, how do you imagine the future of Vieques?

Jenniffer: [00:03:05] I imagine well-informed students, who know a lot about their history. Young people who move forward, who can have their own businesses, who stay here. Many times, these students are forced, or told, that they have to study a professional career and they are not taught. I have had the opportunity to take students to learn about the world of fishermen, of those who do tours in the bay and have different lifestyles who have succeeded. It is not necessarily an eight-hour job in an office. We must also teach them about that diversity. That in Vieques you can also have your own business and succeed.

Alexandra: [00:03:53] And what would you like to see for these children's future?

Jenniffer: [00:03:56] I would like them to be happy, to work in what they like, to be well informed. I would like them to have all the opportunities to be able to study, to be given the necessary help so that they can get ahead and see the world; because many times they stay in Vieques because they are limited, because we are here and it is impossible to leave. It would be my dream for them to be able to explore the world, get ahead and represent us wherever they go.